

<b>13.0</b>	<b>Tourism and the Arts</b>	<b>Page</b>
13.1	Introduction	144
13.2	Tourism Strategy	144
13.3	Transport and Tourism	144
13.4	Tourist Information	144
13.5	Tourist Accommodation	145
13.6	Culture and Tourist Attractions	147

## 13.1 Introduction

13.1.1 Tourism is important to the national and local economy, in terms of generating trade and jobs. Since it relies on a high quality environment, tourism can be a positive force for environmental protection and enhancement. The City Council wishes to achieve sustainable tourism development that serves the interests of both the local economy and the conservation of the environment. In some locations it may assist in urban regeneration.

## 13.2 Tourism Strategy

13.2.1 Policy TA.1 seeks to promote long term sustainable tourist growth. The development of all-year facilities and longer stays aim to make the most efficient use of the tourism infrastructure including both the transport systems and accommodation.

### **POLICY TA.1 - TOURISM STRATEGY**

Planning permission will only be granted for tourism development that seeks to:

- a. promote and support the local economy;
- b. conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of Oxford;
- c. promote alternatives to the private motor car; and
- d. develop all-year facilities and longer stays.

## 13.3 Transport and Tourism

13.3.1 The City Council will encourage tourists to use Park and Ride facilities into Oxford, as part of its sustainable transport policy, thus encouraging proposals for:

- improved comfort areas and small-scale facilities;
- toilet facilities;
- tourist information outlets; and
- improved security measures (CCTV and sensitive lighting).

13.3.2 These additional support facilities should be of an appropriate scale and designed to respect their visual setting adjacent to the Green Belt.

### **POLICY TA.2 - TRANSPORT AND TOURISM**

Planning permission will be granted for improvements to support facilities at Oxford's Park and Ride sites which encourage their use by tourists.

13.3.3 The City Council, in conjunction with the County Council, will investigate the potential for optimising the management of tourist coach pick-up, drop-off and parking facilities in the City centre.

## 13.4 Tourist Information

13.4.1 A high standard of visitor information is important to maximise the benefits of tourism. The City Council will support improved signage and tourist information at the 'gateways' to Oxford such as the Park and Ride sites, the Bus station and the Oxford Railway station. The City Council intends to extend the network of pedestrian signs throughout the City centre. This

will include new sensitively sited signs in appropriate locations including existing car parks, to promote existing and future visitor attractions. All new signs should properly respect their setting, avoid clutter and safeguard the visual amenity of the area.

13.4.2 The City Council will seek contributions towards improvements to tourist information and signing in the City centre and main transport interchanges from significant tourist related developments and new commercial developments in the City centre. The improvements in the City centre should be in keeping with the Public Realm Strategy, and should give priority to improvements in busy pedestrian streets.

#### **POLICY TA.3 - TOURIST INFORMATION**

The City Council will seek contributions towards improvements to tourist information and signage from the development of tourist attractions and major developments in the City centre for:

- a. additional tourist information points, including the Park and Ride sites, the Bus station and Oxford station;
- b. interpretative displays;
- c. extending and enhancing the network of signs for pedestrians and cyclists in Oxford; and
- d. improvements to traffic sign-posting for tourists;

Where appropriate, the City Council will seek contributions towards improved tourist information which will be secured by a planning obligation.

### **13.5 Tourist Accommodation**

#### **Hotels**

13.5.1 There has been an increase in the provision of hotel accommodation in Oxford. This has improved the overall supply in the City, but is mainly aimed at the top end of the market and generally sited in out-of-centre locations. There is some need for additional hotel accommodation provision in Oxford during the Plan period.

13.5.2 Hotel development is considered acceptable as part of the mixed-use redevelopment of the following sites. Section 14.0, Development Sites gives more site details and other acceptable land uses. The additional provision of hotel accommodation is in line with the projected growth in need for this type of visitor accommodation. Proposals that seek to improve the range and diversity of accommodation on these sites will be encouraged.

#### **City centre:**

- part of Oxford Castle site;
- part of land at Worcester Street Car Park site;
- part of land at Oxpens; and
- part of the land at Oxford Railway station.

13.5.3 Any additional sites will be considered against the need for additional hotel development, and then in accordance with the sequential test and other policies in the Plan.

#### **Guest Houses**

13.5.4 There is a need to improve both the range and standard of accommodation available to encourage visitors to stay longer in Oxford.

13.5.5 The Oxford Guest House and Small Hotel Sector Study (June 2004) concluded that there has been no material change in the supply of small serviced accommodation in Oxford over the past five years. Demand for guest-houses and small hotels is still strong in the City centre and Headington, but there is no evidence of undersupply in other parts of the city. The study highlighted pressures in Oxford for changes to alternative uses and therefore a need to resist the loss of guest-houses and small hotels.

13.5.6 Policies TA.4 and TA.5 aim to retain the existing stock of guest-houses, and support the provision of additional accommodation in a range of locations on identified roads into Oxford and within the City centre. In these locations, changes of use of suitable residential properties, or extensions to existing guest-houses, would be supported subject to certain criteria.

#### **POLICY TA.4 - TOURIST ACCOMMODATION**

Planning permission will be granted for development that maintains, strengthens and diversifies the range of short-stay accommodation subject to the following criteria:

- a. it is located on the following roads into Oxford: Abingdon Road, Banbury Road, Botley Road, Cherwell Drive / Marston Ferry Road, Cowley Road / Oxford Road, Church Cowley Road, Headley Way, Henley Avenue, Hollow Way, Iffley Road, London Road, Marston Road, Old Road, Rose Hill, The Slade, Windmill Road, Woodstock Road; or in the City centre;
- b. it is acceptable in terms of access, parking, highway safety, traffic generation, pedestrian and cycle movements
- c. part of the existing dwelling is retained for residential use; and
- d. it will not result in an unacceptable level of noise and disturbance to nearby residents.

Planning permission will only be granted for the change of use of short-stay accommodation when either of the following criteria are met:

- e. no other occupier can be found following a realistic effort to market the premises for the existing use; or
- f. evidence of non-viability is submitted.

13.5.7 Dual use of visitor accommodation by students will only be permitted where this would not lead to a substantial loss of visitor accommodation. Proposals will be assessed on their individual circumstances as a matter of fact and degree, and include factors such as the amount of accommodation used and the time period involved.

13.5.8 The dual use of student accommodation during vacation periods for tourist-related uses, such as conferences and language schools, makes the best use of existing resources. However, the City Council will need to ensure that the adverse impact of additional parking on the amenity of surrounding properties is properly controlled.

#### **POLICY TA.5 - TOURIST ACCOMMODATION - DUAL USE**

Planning permission will only be granted for the dual use of established visitor accommodation by students if this will not lead to a substantial loss of visitor accommodation.

Planning permission will be granted for the dual use of student accommodation for short-stay visitors and conferences during vacations, provided that the planning application includes a package of sustainable transport measures that would be secured by planning conditions or a planning obligation. Where appropriate, the City Council may only allow a temporary change of use.

## 13.6 Culture and Tourist Attractions

13.6.1 The City Council aims to enhance the cultural importance of Oxford and the “arts”. We will protect and promote Oxford’s cultural status through the retention of art and entertainment venues. Site-specific attractions will be encouraged as part of mixed-use redevelopment of certain sites, which are dealt with in Section 14.0, Development Sites. Appendix 10 gives a summary of sites, listed by their type of land use.

13.6.2 The City Council seeks to create a leisure, arts and music quarter in the west end of the City centre including the Castle site, Hythe Bridge Street, the Odeon Cinema on George Street, Oxford Railway Station, Oxpens site, Park End Street and Worcester Street car park. Details for individual sites are provided in Section 14.0, Development Sites.

13.6.3 Oxford has many important established tourist attractions, such as the Ashmolean Museum, Modern Art Oxford, and the Bodleian Library. The City Council will support extensions and enhancements and promote greater use of all existing attractions. We will also encourage additional tourist attractions to add diversity and to offer a wider range of activities for visitors to enjoy.

### **POLICY TA.6 - CULTURE AND ART ATTRACTIONS**

Planning permission will be granted for the development of additional tourist attractions, and enhancements or extensions to existing attractions, if they:

- a. make a significant contribution to the conservation or regeneration of the area;
- b. enable the re-use of redundant buildings or previously developed land;
- c. are realistically accessible by walking, cycling or public transport for the majority of people travelling to the site;
- d. do not cause environmental or traffic problems;
- e. are well designed and enhance the appearance of the area; and
- f. are well related to existing or proposed tourist and leisure related areas; and
- g. add to the cultural diversity of Oxford.

13.6.4 There is a shortage of existing facilities for the performance and enjoyment of the arts within Oxford. The City Council will protect public venues, cultural and art attractions and promote enhancements or extensions to existing art-related premises. Section 14.0, Development Sites, allocates sites for community art-related use. Appendix 10 gives a summary of sites, listed by their type of land use. Additional sites will be considered in relation to the following policy.

### **POLICY TA.7 - ARTS FACILITIES**

Planning permission will only be granted for the loss of existing public art venues, cultural and art attractions if overriding reasons are demonstrated or alternative provision is made in the area.

Planning permission will be granted for additional public art venues, cultural and art attractions, and enhancements or extensions to existing facilities if they:

- a. make a contribution to the conservation or regeneration of the area;
- b. are appropriate in terms of siting, scale, massing and materials, and respect the character of the area; and
- c. do not cause environmental or traffic problems.

13.6.5 The City Council will encourage new developments, and changes of use, for art-related uses such as artists' studios, galleries, rehearsal areas, and exhibition facilities as a means of promoting the arts. Small business and workshop units in Oxford, which are not protected as key employment sites by Policy EC.2 (in Section 8.0, Economy), will be considered suitable.

#### **POLICY TA.8 - THE ARTS**

Planning permission will be granted for new developments, changes of use or redevelopment of existing commercial premises for art-related uses, subject to the following criteria:

- a. the use is appropriate to the location; and
- b. the development is appropriate in terms of siting, scale, massing, details and materials that respect the character of the area; and
- c. the development makes a positive contribution in design terms to the appearance of the area.